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SUBJECT: 2009 DRUG ARREST AND SEIZURE STATISTICS; MARCH 12 - APRIL 25

¶1. (U) Summary. This cable is the third in a monthly series recording significant counternarcotics activity in Afghanistan.

COUNTERNARCOTICS HIGHLIGHTS

¶2. (SBU) DEA/NIU Operation WARTHAWG: On April 20, DEA, in conjunction with Afghan National Interdiction (NIU) and Sensitive Investigative Unit (SIU) executed two Afghan search warrants on a cache location in Achin District, Nangarhar Province. The initial search did not turn up any illicit drugs, but a tip from a detained suspect led agents to a previously unknown location approximately 700 meters from the initial targets. Agents uncovered a cache of 3000 kilograms of morphine base buried six feet deep in a wheat field. SIU agents also seized 12 kilograms of hashish, 5 kilograms of marijuana seeds, 1 kilogram of opium, 1 AK-47 magazine and a 9mm pistol in an adjacent compound. No arrests were made as the area was abandoned. DoS INL Air Wing provided air support for the eight-hour mission.

¶3. (SBU) Governor Led Eradication (GLE)/Poppy Eradication Force (PEF): Total eradication figures as of 25 April stand at 4,474 hectares, with the majority in Helmand province. The PEF departed Helmand on April 11, after a three-month operation, with a final total of 2,644 hectares eradicated, doubling last year's total. In contrast, GLE nationally is lagging compared to last year. Most southern provinces did little to no GLE. Helmand eradicated 1,551 hectares this year. Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Farah deployed forces late so results will be limited. With harvest season starting in the south, the emphasis has shifted to the Northern provinces. We expect Herat, Badakhshan, Farayab, Kapisa, and Baghlan can all achieve poppy free status this year with credible GLE campaigns. (We will report on GLE program challenges by septel.)

¶4. (SBU) Drug Demand Reduction: Drug use in Afghanistan is getting significant press attention. NPR's Morning Edition and MSNBC have done reports highlighting the problem and the international press is showing increased interest in the issue. Meanwhile, the GIRoA announced a plan to move all current inhabitants of the Russian Cultural Center, a notorious drug haven, to another location, reportedly an abandoned building on the outskirts of Kabul. Details are still unclear on what support will be provided at this location. Once cleared, the Cultural Center will be handed back to the Russian Government for renovation. This plan is due to take place in early

May.

¶5. (SBU) Counter Narcotics Justice Task Force (CJTF). CJTF is moving operations to a better equipped facility sooner than anticipated as Minister Atmar ordered the CJTF to vacate its current building so he could turn it over to the election police. Although the move will enhance operations in the long term, the two-week move is having a significant impact on current investigations.

DRUG ARREST AND SEIZURE STATISTICS

¶6. (SBU) The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Kabul provided the following information on counternarcotics (CN) arrests and seizures for March and April 2009. The statistics are broken down by law enforcement organization.

¶7. (SBU) Kabul Country Office (DEA): Seizures (all made by the SIU); Opium seized: 16.25 kg; Morphine: 3,906 kg; Precursor chemicals: 217 liters.

¶8. (SBU) Counternarcotics Police of Afghanistan (CNPA): Arrests: 60; Heroin seized: 797.7 kg; Opium seized: 72.5 kg; Morphine seized: 8.9 kg; Hashish seized: 1,087.7 kg; Precursor chemicals: 116,930 liters.

¶9. (SBU) Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF): Arrests: 0; Opium seized: 731 kg; Morphine seized: 6 kg; Precursor chemicals seized: 2,050 liters of acid; 650 kg of lime.

¶10. (SBU) Total seizures of all agencies (March & April): Opium:

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220.2 kg; Heroin: 797.7 kg; Morphine: 920.9 kg; Hashish: 1,087.7 kg; Precursor chemicals: 119,197 liters and 650 kg of solids.

¶11. (SBU) Total seizures in 2009: Arrests: 98; Opium: 9,638.2 kg; Heroin: 6,800.7 kg; Morphine: 12,235.9 kg; hashish: 12,883 kg; Precursor chemicals (liquid): 120,236 liters; Precursor chemicals (solid): 4,415 kg

SIGNIFICANT CASES

¶12. (SBU) On March 22, the SIU arrested two would-be smugglers and seized 210 liters of precursor chemicals at Kabul International Airport. The arrested individuals cooperated with investigators, leading to the arrest of two more suspects. They implicated Gul Karim, former security commander of Jalalabad City, as the owner of the chemicals. A CJTF unit attempted to initiate surveillance on Gul Karim's residence in Nangarhar but he was tipped off and fled the area. Authorities are pursuing Gul Karim. Despite this setback, this case saw SIU using diverse investigative techniques including surveillance, undercover personnel, and telephone intelligence as well as employing Afghan female investigators.

¶13. (SBU) Two women were arrested on April 1 in Jalalabad on suspicion of wearing suicide vests under their burkas. A search by female police officers revealed instead vests containing 14.6 kgs of heroin. This could indicate a new smuggling tactic as narcotics traffickers have not been known to use female drug couriers.

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